FEBRUARY
2022

An American classic returns. How good is it? Page 7

Oklahoma Chess Magazine

Chess News and Chess History for Oklahoma

Published Bi-Monthly Online

OCM

Welcome to the first "Bi-Monthly" issue of the OCM.

After five years of monthly publication we are switching to an easier schedule, but will continue to have chess news and features, and now will also serve as the official publication of the OCA, with inside news about upcoming chess stuff in this region.

Look for each issue on the first day of the even-numbered months throughout 2022. — T.B.

The Last of the Oklahoma Chess Hippies

John Wilbur Green III

January 20, 1952 - December 8, 2017

by Rebecca Rutledge

When we learned of the passing of John Green, the longtime Oklahoma player who organized a Tulsa team for the 1980 National Chess League, we reached out to players so they could share their memories of him.

Tom Braunlich was a frequent opponent of Green's in the 1970s and '80s. He describes him as an under-

Editor: Tom Braunlich
Asst. Ed. Rebecca Rutledge

Send story submissions and tournament reports, etc., to:
mailto:tom.braunlich@cox.net

Published Bi-monthly on Feb 1, April 1, June 1, August 1, October 1, and December 1

The OCM now serves as the official publication of the Oklahoma Chess Association

In This Issue:

•
John W. Green
•
Howard Zhong Annotates
•
IM John Donaldson Book Review
•
Plus News Bites, Game of the Month, Puzzles, Top 25 List, Tournament Reports, and more.

CHECKMATE – John Green has been playing chess 26 of his 29 years — and now will be putting together a team for the National Chess League. One of Cla[illegible]re's most avid chess players, he also helps promote the Claremore Chess Club and area tournaments. (Progress Photo)

1976 photo of Green in the Claremore Progress newspaper.

rated tournament player who favored "all the sharpest Bobby Fischer-approved lines." In 1980-81, when Braunlich was a student at OSU in Stillwater and rated near 2300, Green recruited him for Tulsa's team in the *National Chess League*, (a series of team matches played over the telephone via trunk lines). John had organized a team for Tulsa in the league, which required him to get local corporate sponsorship to cover the franchise fee and the telephone costs.

Green was team captain and assembled a roster of expert- and master-rated Oklahoma players, but they were up against large cities with senior masters and even GMs. So when Braunlich scored an upset win for Tulsa against IM Bruce Rind from Philadelphia, Green was elated.

"It was a rather lucky win for me, and I think John was even happier than I was. He came over to me with a huge grin on his face, pumping my hand in what may be the most gleeful handshake I've ever had!" Braunlich remembers. He annotates a typical game of his with John on page 15.

Joe Veal describes Green as "the last of the Oklahoma chess hippies who were around during the Fischer boom," a well-prepared player with a proclivity for tactics. In Veal's opinion, the only thing that kept Green from

> John Green was ""the last of the Oklahoma chess hippies who were around during the Fischer boom."
> — Joe Veal

reaching the rank of Expert was his tendency to "whip through 20 moves in a minute on an analog clock to escape a flag forfeit on the first time control." (40/2, SD/1 was the fashionable time control back then, with no increments.)

Veal remembers a story Frank Berry shared about Green. Soviet GM Eduard Gufeld had come to Tulsa to play a simul. After the event, Gufeld said Green's match had been his toughest of the day, and asked Berry what his rating was. When Berry replied 1600, Gufeld snorted in disbelief and said that was nonsense — Green had played like at least a 2000.

"It seemed to me that chess gave John a purpose," Veal said. He remembers how hard Green used to train, "both *chesswise* and physically," to prepare for a tournament. But though he took his chess seriously, "he was good natured about it," Veal said. "He didn't groan over his losses or gloat about his wins. I found John to be a nice break from some of the monomaniacal characters that were around at that time. He was reasonable and kind."

John Green in 2010.

In the 1980s Green was active in chess organization and on the OCA Board. He spearheaded a major revamp of the OCA Bylaws. In later years he played less frequently but was still active in tournaments.

Sho Glashausser was ten years old when he faced Green in the final round of the 2014 NAO in Stillwater. Neither player knew it would be Green's last tournament match.

At first it seemed uncertain a match would even take place, Glashausser said. After he'd waited 20 minutes or so for his opponent to arrive, TD Frank Berry wandered over and told him to sit tight. Berry said Green was "a former hippie" who maintained a relaxed attitude toward start times, and would show up when he was ready.

"Mr. Green appeared after about a half hour," remembers Glashausser. "So I had a consistent advantage on the clock." It was looking good for Glashausser in the middlegame; he had a favorable position with a blockade against an isolated queen pawn. But then he slipped, giving his opponent a chance to equalize.

Green didn't seize the chance soon enough, though. Deep in thought as he examined the board, he considered his next move until it was too late to make it.

For the final time in a long and colorful career, John Green's time had run out.

HOLIDAY OPEN DRAWS 47 PLAYERS

Expert David Luscomb Wins this Christmastime Classic

The traditional one-day holiday feast of chess drew a nice turnout on December 18 to the Harvard Avenue Baptist Church venue in Tulsa for the 30th Annual rendition.

Normally the Holiday Open is always held on "the Saturday between Christmas and New Years Day." But this time those two dates themselves fell on a Saturday, necessitating the move forward to December 18.

Jim Berry started the Holiday Open 30 years ago, and has experimented with various types of formats and prizes over the years. This one featured a free pizza lunch included with the entry fee.

Berry was on hand again this year to act as chief TD, assisted by Harold Brown Jr. and also Alex Evers of Stillwater, who is 'learning the ropes' as a new TD apprentice.

David Luscomb (2055) won convincingly by overcoming four under-rated young players. He showed the consistency needed, including in the last round win over Rahul Pai.

Rahul Pai had an excellent event, including a nice win over yours truly. (See games section.) And he held a good position against Luscomb on board one in the last round before he fell into time pressure in that game.

Max Barnes and **Joshua Li** both scored 3½ to tie for 2nd place and the Class A prize.

Newcomer **Vaughan Rees**, who won the reserve section at the FKB Memorial a few months earlier, had another good event raising his provisional USCF rating now up over 1700. His 3-1 score, with the only loss to Luscomb.

In the Novice section two players scored 4-0 to win first place, both of whom are

newcomers who will receive high provisional ratings: **Garrett Hunt**, and **Kuhmar Asim Rezzaq-Shannon**.

Kuhmar is the manager of a Braum's store in Tulsa. This is his first tournament, although I believe he played some scholastic chess when he was young. Scholastic players rejoining chess when they grow up is the USCF's dream. He began with a provisional rating over 1300 from his first regular-rated event; that's excellent.

Stone Burton, **Roman Miller**, and **Marshall Berry** also had fine events scoring 3-1 to finish tied for 3rd in the Novice section.

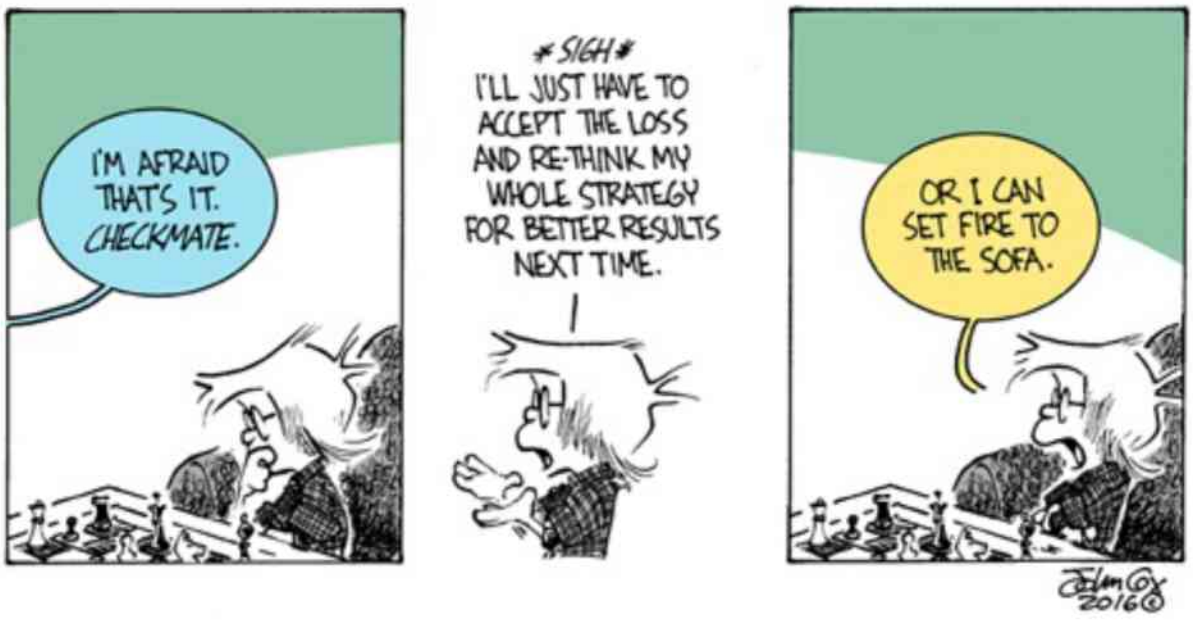
SEE CROSSTABLES HERE

The Trend for New Players in 2021

This tournament saw 10 players participating as unrateds in their first regular-rated USCF tournament, a trend which persisted throughout all our tournaments in the 2nd half of 2021 as Over-The-Board play returned last June following the lockdown year.

Obviously there was a lot of pent-up demand for personal play caused by the pandemic and other forces, and although online chess play helped people to get their 'chess fix' it also seems to have not been enough to satisfy new players discovering the beauty and challenge of the sport. Perhaps at some point online play gets boring with its lack of real social interaction – one of the features of chess that makes it fun. Newcomers who start playing online perhaps soon begin to wonder what it would be like to play face-to-face with a real live person! They try events like this, and hopefully most of them will agree it is more fun this way! Let's hope this trend continues in 2022!

The playing hall, with Stone Burton and Rezzaq-Shannon in front.


I'M AFRAID THAT'S IT. CHECKMATE.
SIGH
I'LL JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT THE LOSS AND RE-THINK MY WHOLE STRATEGY FOR BETTER RESULTS NEXT TIME.
OR I CAN SET FIRE TO THE SOFA.
2016©

Zhong Annotates

by NM Howard Zhong

*Okie **Howard Zhong** who is now a junior at M.I.T. where he is active on their chess team (and is also supposedly learning a lot of stuff) recently played in the Pan-Am Intercollegiate Team Championship.*

Howard sends us two draws he contested with grandmasters during this event, annotated in his usual candid style.

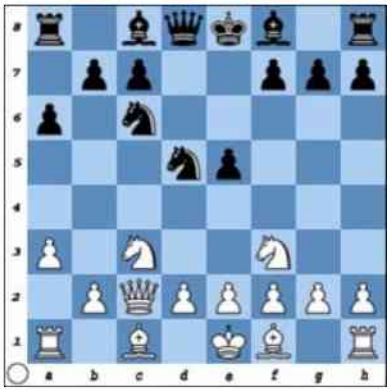
I recently played at Pan-Ams for MIT and sent along some notes on 2 of my broadcasted games. It was really cool seeing again people who've played in Oklahoma before -- Alex, Veronica, Joey, Tianming....

Bruzon Batista, Lazaro (2712)
Zhong, Howard (2302) [A28]
2022 Pan-Am (2), 07.01.2022

Going in to the game, I did not know what opening to expect.

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.Qc2 a6?

[6...Be7 is more natural. I did not see what followed.]



7.Nxe5 Nxe5 8.Qe4

At this point, I was ready to play a few more moves and concede. Down a pawn against a stronger opponent didn't seem fun.

8...Nxc3 9.Qxe5+ Be7 10.dxc3

He thought surprisingly long on this move. I was happy about my development lead, but wasn't certain it'd be enough.

10...0-0 11.Bf4 Bd6 12.Qd4 Bxf4 13.Qxf4 c5 14.e3 Qb6 15.Rb1

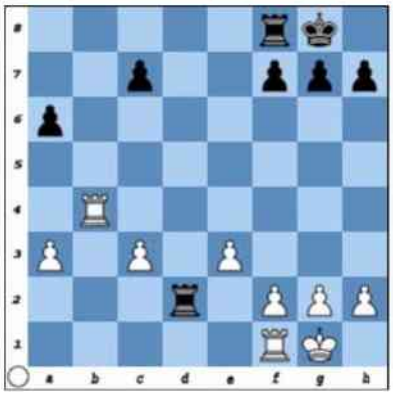
[15.0-0-0 strongest move]

15...Be6

[15...Qg6 I considered this along with Be6, but missed Bc4 could be played after Be6]

16.Bc4 Rad8 17.0-0 Bxc4 18.Qxc4 Rd2 19.b4 cxb4 20.Rxb4 Qc6 21.Qxc6 bxc6

NM Howard Zhong (right) plays GM Lazaro-Buzon (2712) at 2021 Pan-Am Intercollegiate.



22.g4!

This is a rough endgame for black, though my rook on d2 gave me small chances. g4 is the correct move so I don't play h5 in the future in endings without queenside pawns.

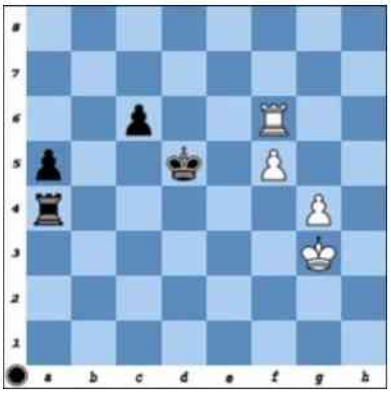
22...h6 23.h4 Rfd8 24.Rfb1 Ra2 25.a4 g5

Trading pawns on kingside increases my drawing chances.

26.hxg5 hxg5 27.Rb8 Rxb8 28.Rxb8+ Kg7 29.Rb4 f6 30.Kg2 Kf7 31.Kg3 Ke6

White is better but both of us are low on time, with him having less.

32.f4 gxf4+ 33.exf4 a5 34.Re4+ Kd5 35.Rd4+ Ke6 36.f5+ Ke5 37.Kf3 Ra3 38.Re4+ Kd5 39.Re6 Rxc3+ 40.Kf4 Rc4+ 41.Kg3 Rxa4 42.Rxf6



At this point, I wasn't sure about the evaluation but liked that I had more chances by pushing my pawns.

42...Ra1 43.Kf4

[43.Rf8 turns out this is the only move to go for a win. Whites king shouldn't block the pawns as what happened in the game.]

43...a4

At this point, it is a draw as my pawns are faster.

44.Rf8 a3 45.Ra8 a2 46.Kg5 Kc4 47.f6 c5 48.f7 Rf1 49.Kg6 Kb3 50.Rb8+ Kc3 51.Ra8 Kb2 52.Rb8+ Kc3 53.Ra8

I was pretty relieved I lucked out with a draw. I missed many obvious ideas of his during the game, but guess both of us were rusty.

½-½

Zhong, Howard (2302)
Sorokin, Aleksey (2643) [D97]
2022 Pan-Am (5), 08.01.2022

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Qb3 dxc4 6.Qxc4 0-0 7.e4 Nc6 8.Be2 e5 9.d5 Nd4 10.Nxd4 exd4 11.Qxd4 c6 12.Qc4 b5 13.Qb3

GM Sorokin

[13.Qxc6 more aggressive option. white is slightly better, but I didn't know theory and wanted to play it safe.]

13...cxd5 14.exd5 b4

I didn't expect him to play such a simplifying move. While objectively correct, the resulting position is harder to win.

15.Qxb4 Nxd5 16.Nxd5 Qxd5 17.0-0 Qe5 18.Bf3 Rb8 19.Qa4

19...Qd4

I was surprised he wanted to trade queens. While I may be slightly better otherwise, his winning chances greatly decreased.

[19...a5 20.Bf4 Qb5 was what I expected.]

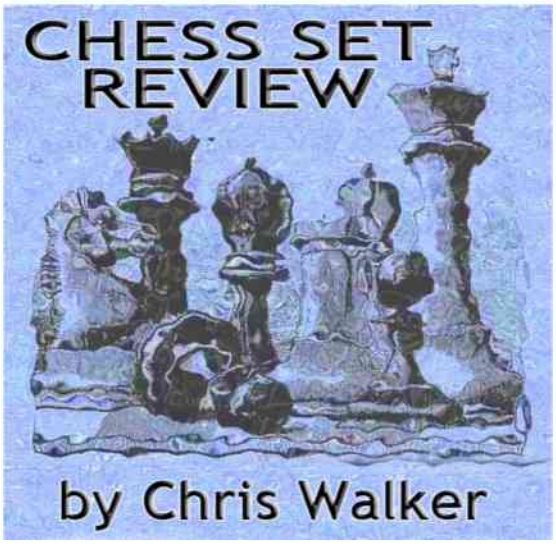
20.Qxd4 Bxd4 21.Bh6

I saw that the following continuation would yield lots of trades and no more pawns on the queenside.

21...Rd8 22.Rad1 Rxb2 23.Be3 Bf6 24.Rxd8+ Bxd8 25.Bxa7

We were one of the first to finish, and I was happy with the result. It didn't seem he had a strong desire to win and neither did I.

½-½



The Resurrected Classic:

The Drueke "No. 35 Players Choice" Set Returns in Plastic

The Drueke No. 35 Player's Choice in Plastic, $59. Link here.

One of the most popular tournament chess set designs in this region was the Drueke "Player's Choice" set from the 1960s. But in recent decades, if you wanted to get one of these sets you'd have to spend upwards of $200 bidding for it on EBay, even though it originally sold for $7.50.

But now, the Drueke Company has come out with a NEW plastic version, reviewed here.

I came across it by accident. I heard about the new classic Drueke crisscross cut wood boards (another classic) being made again from a thread on the chess.com forums. I checked out the website, and came across this new Player's Choice set.

I knew that it was Tom's favorite set from the '70s, so much so that

The classic original Player's Choice Set, known for its solid wide-base pieces which create a distinctive "American" Staunton style.

he'd sprung for the expensive wooden reproduction available at USCF Sales. So naturally I told him about the new plastic version. He bought one and asked me to write the review.

Let's first recap its history. Drueke Games was established in 1914 and continued to make classic board games up until 1990, when the Carrom Company purchased them. The classic designs Drueke had made seemed to die with it.

The iconic Drueke "Players Choice" design was introduced in 1965 and was the set used in the US Open in Las Vegas that year. To me this design is the '1957 Chevy' of chess sets — always a classic which ages well and never goes out of style.

ANNOUNCING . . .

A NEW U. S. C. F. BARGAIN!

The Players' Choice

CHESS SET

This set, introduced for the first time at the NATIONAL OPEN in Las Vegas last February, proved so popular with the players that EVERY ONE of the 100 tournament sets on hand was SOLD on the last day of the tournament! Ideal design, proper base size and correct weighting make this the finest, most PRACTICAL chess set available at anywhere near the price. Made of Hi-impact, satin-finished plastic, it will stand up to years of tough tournament use. The piece shown is actual size; King is 3½" tall. Shipped in a sturdy cardboard box. Price to USCF Members: just **$7.50**, postpaid! (Outside continental U.S. add $1 for postage).

Order From

80 E. 11 St. **U. S. C. F.** New York, N. Y. 10003

OCTOBER, 1965

The original ad for the Player's Choice in *Chess Review* magazine.

TOP 25

For FEBRUARY 2022

Active Oklahoma Players

	Player	This Month	Change	
1	Advait Patel	2537	0	
2	Howard Zhong	2302	0	
3	Ryan Amburgy	2289	13	
4	Tom Braunlich	2200	0	
5	Mark Hulsey	2153	0	
6	David Zelnick	2108	0	
7	Charles D Unruh	2085	0	
8	Veronika Zilajeva	2084	4	▲
9	Anthony Paolercio	2080	0	▼
10	David Luscomb	2052	20	▲
11	Charles M Unruh	2049	0	▼
12	Tom Patton	2048	0	▼
13	Matt Dalthorp	2044	0	▼
14	James Long	2041	0	▼
15	Jeff Colbert	2008	0	
16	Stephen Gehly	2000	0	
17	Maxwell Barnes	1958	60	▲
18	Logan Zachare	1940	0	▼
19	Jerry Casteel	1929	3	▼
20	Wayne Hatcher	1926	0	▲
21	Oscar Wang	1925	-1	▼
22	Joe Dean Veal	1924	0	▼
23	Harold Brown Jr.	1901	0	▼
24	Maxwell Xie	1856	17	▼
25	Adley Bufford	1828	0	▼

Player of the Month

DAVID LUSCOMB

David won the Holiday Open while also working for FedEx in the middle of the super-hectic 2021 holiday season! Double Kudos!

The original set was popular due to the low center of gravity of the pieces, which were solid and heavy looking (particularly the knights and bishops). They were made out of *Bakelite* (an early form of hard plastic) and were heavily weighted with lead inside.

The signature piece of this iconic American style set is the wide-body strong knight, here compared with a normal 'thin' Staunton knight like this French one by Lardy.

I want to say, first off, that the new plastic version does look exactly like the original.

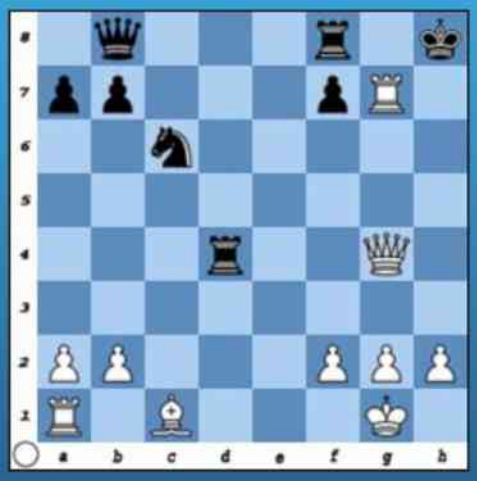
However it doesn't feel like the original.

These new Players Choice sets are being made with hand poured plastics into molds that are not made with precision stainless steel. The pieces are rough and have divots along with tips not fully molded.

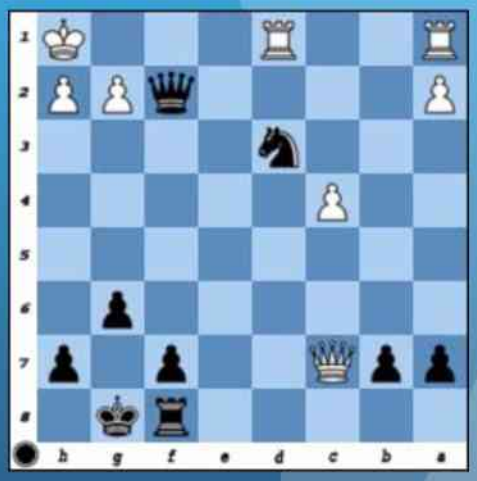
Upon my inspection of the pieces I noticed a white pawn and two black pawns appeared to be lopsided. The black knights were rough but the white knights were really rough with excess flashing. The queens were okay but the crowns were not completely filled out. The rest of the pieces were okay, minus the rough texture and slight spots of glossy finish. The set is slightly weighted according to the website. It is closely equal to the

PUZZLES

Answers Next Page



White to move and win. (Medium)



Black to move and win. (Difficult)

original weight.

On the plus side, the pieces are easy to distinguish in play, and appear to be very durable, appropriate for rough tournament or blitz play, able to stand up to abuse (better than the original in fact). And it comes with extra queens.

All in all it is a playable set. If you can get past the molding imperfections and have a love for the Players Choice set, then this set might be what you are seeking. This handmade set could be an inexpensive alternative for acquiring a Player's Choice.

> "To me, this set is the '1957 Chevy' of chess sets — always a classic that never goes out of style."

The wooden version produced by House of Staunton for the USCF is great, but at $279 it is not a set to be taken to the local club.

My personal final thoughts of the set:

I like the set but I hate the imperfections. Even though the price point is far below the premium wood versions, it is still quite pricey for the quality. I think that using the hand pouring with non-precision made molds method is outdated and wasteful. If they don't want to invest into injection molding, I think it would be better for them to make this set using a 3D printer and give it a good finish or cast epoxy resin blanks and turn and carve the pieces using a CNC machine.

I personally would pass on getting this set. I love the 'No 35' set but the OCD in me can't get past the imperfections.

Answers to the Puzzles

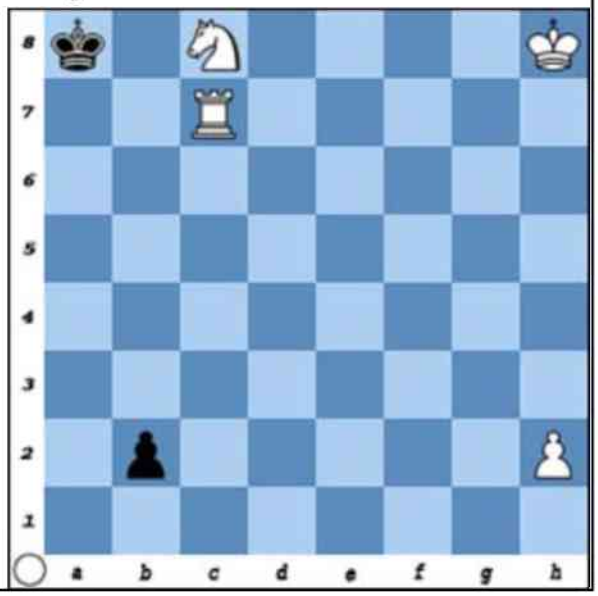
(1) **1. Rg8+**! Rxg8 2. Qh5+ Kg7 3. Qh6 mate. A pattern to remember.

(2) **1. … Qd4**!! An amazing retreat into a self-pin! But it wins. Black threatens the old smothered mate with …Nf2 etc. next move, and also threatens to just win a full rook forking d1. But the sweet thing is that the queen eyes the rook on a1 and thus prevents white from sacking back the exchange. For example, if 2. Rxd3, then 2…Qxa1 and mate. Or if 2. Rf1, Nf2+ 3.Rxf2 (3. Kg1 Nh3+ 4. Kh1, Qg1+ 5. Rxg1, Nf2 mate) 3…Qxa1 and mate.
White has to make luft with 2. h3 but this loses a full rook after 2…Nf2+ and 3….Nxd1.

A THORNY PUZZLE

Jerry Casteel discovered this fascinating position, which arose in one of his games on chess.com against a 2450 player. "It was a very complicated game, very dynamic," he said. Jerry discovered there is only one solution and turned it into a great puzzle that has several false trails and red herrings. When I first saw it I assumed it had been created long ago by some composer in the deep snows of Russia. But I was shocked to hear it apparently occurred by accident in a real game, and perhaps this is proof that composed puzzles are relevant and their themes can happen in actual games too. It took me an hour and a half to solve it(!) but was well worth the effort when I found the pleasing key. See if you can do better.

White is up material but black's pawn is about to queen, and looks unstoppable.



WHITE TO MOVE AND WIN
Jerry Casteel

The full solution is on page 19

Visit ochess.org

OCA Renames State Championship and Takes Other Actions

The Oklahoma Chess Association's board of directors had a meeting by Zoom on January 29, 2022 and made some decisions.

President Chris Amburgy said, "The Board voted to officially rename the State Championship event to ***"Jerry Spann Memorial, Oklahoma State Championship"*** in honor of Jerry Spann and his contributions to chess in Oklahoma and the US."

The change is actually a re-rename. The annual championship began in 1946 as the "Oklahoma Open." In 1968, following the death of Jerry Spann, who was an important president of the U.S. Chess Federation and international chess organizer during the early Fischer years (written about many times previously in this publication), the OCA members at that time voted to henceforth call the championship the "Jerry Spann Memorial." That name held for 35 years until in 2003 a 'Rift' between two factions of the OCA led to it going back to "Oklahoma Open" for a while. But the rename now restores the Jerry Spann name.

Amburgy also announced the target date for the "Jerry Spann" will be **June 25-26, 2022**. "We hope to nail down a venue in the next two weeks and get a TLA out. Right now, we're focusing on Tulsa venues since that is where the board has connections, but if there is anyone who has an OKC venue that is reasonably priced, we will consider that as well."

Board member Paul Covington has also proposed that OCA sponsor a **"closed"** round-robin for a state invitational championship like some nearby states have (i.e. Colorado, Missouri). **This event would not supersede the traditional Jerry Spann Memorial, which would continue to determine the official state champion. But perhaps it would have a "Cup"** trophy and a lot of prestige, as a 6-player invitational for the top players. The board is studying this idea.

An ***Oklahoma Senior Open Championship*** was also sanctioned by the OCA board for April 2-3. Harold Brown Jr. proposed the event and will organize it in Stroud, halfway between OKC and Tulsa where the FKB Memorial was last year. It will be a 4-SS, two games per day at full time controls, with generous prizes. The top Okie player qualifies to represent the state at the Irwin Tournament of Senior State Champions that is held at the U.S. Open (in California this Summer). Details will be up soon at ochess.org and online in TLA at uschess.org.

OKC Channel 5 Chess Video

Channel Five News in OKC recently aired an interesting report about the chess club in OKC that meets at the Full Circle Bookstore on Saturday afternoons. It gives great glimpses of the club, full of players. See it here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYXXW4gSh1I&list=TLGGv0VAZFsHAIsyMzAxMjAyMg

Gabe Coss Chess Woodcrafting Video

Okie player and amateur wood turner Gabe Coss has produced another excellent video as he hand-crafted a beautiful Dubrovnik chess set, and it's really well produced — done in fast speed. As he makes the pieces he puts them one at a time on the board and plays a cool game at the same time. Check it out here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iU8yYHwK1vc

CONTINUED...

FRANKOMA POTTERY AND CHESS

What does the iconic Oklahoma-style pottery company founded in 1933 that used to be in Sapulpa on Route 66 have to do with chess? After all, **Frankoma** went out of business in 2010.

Answer: Chess player ***Dennis Glascock*** bought the molds and the name, and is going lead Frankoma to a comeback!

Dennis was an engineer for Phillips Petroleum in Bartlesville and an active tournament chess player since the early 1980s with a solid 1900+ rating. He was also a leader of the OCA at that time, and was a good friend with the late Steve Wharry who also worked for Phillips. He has lived in Houston for the past few years.

Now he is building a new 10,000 square foot facility in **Glenpool** (west Tulsa) at Highway 75 and 171st Street South. It will feature a factory and a retail store. He hopes to open in the spring with about a dozen workers.

Initially, he plans to focus on a limited inventory of artware, mugs and vintage pottery. If all goes as planned, he will then bring back the vintage dinnerware for which Frankoma was famous.

SIMPLE CHESS DISPLAY SOLUTION

Do you own a beautiful chess set but don't know a practical or cool way to display it?

Laying it out on a nice wooden chessboard on a table takes up a lot of room in a busy household. Placing it on bookshelves tends to be awkward.

Don't let it languish in the box!

Here is a way to display it conveniently and inexpensively on a wall, like a piece of artwork, for all to see; yet out of the way.

Amazon and other online sellers support companies that make all kinds of display shelves meant for collectible items, and some of them fit a chess set perfectly. In particular, the above brand is by IKEE and comes stained either brown or white, as above. It is $32.50 on Amazon, here:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B08PCKB6F9/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_image_o03_s00?ie=UTF8&th=1

It is ready to mount. Put two side-by-side as in the photo and you have a ready-made artistic display that will impress all of your friends! Make sure it is in a well-lighted area.

RRSO Founders Jim Hollingsworth (left) and Tom Nichols.

19th Red River Shootout Gearing Up for April 23

"The annual team match between the most fanatical chess players in Oklahoma and Texas" is slated again for Davis, OK. The one-day fun event features team captains who match up a slate of evenly matched players for the lineups. If you are interested in being chosen as a player, contact Jim Berry at JABerryCG@aol.com for more information.

Oklahoma currently holds the traveling trophy, and has won four of the last five years. However, word has it that the Texicans have checked out some chess books from the library, so you never know… ;-)

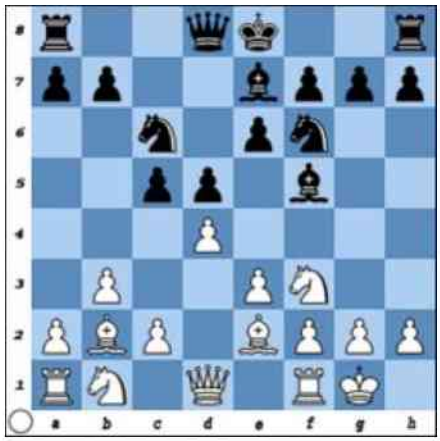
Max Barnes sent me notes to his upset win at the recent OSCO event. It's our GOTM…

Barnes, Maxwell (1911)
Amburgy, Ryan (2280) [A01]
OSCO Yukon "Premier" (4.1), 08.01.2022

[Notes by Max Barnes]

This is my highest rated tournament win. I'm mainly proud of how I played this game and won it pretty cleanly by never letting up on a small advantage.

1.b3 d5 2.Bb2 Bf5 3.Nf3 e6 4.e3 Nf6 5.Be2 Be7 6.0-0 c5 7.d4 Nc6



Standard opening moves. Here the main move is dxc5, but I had prepared a new move before the match…

8.Nbd2 0-0 9.a3 cxd4 10.Nxd4 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Qc7

This position is objectively fine for white, but it can be sort of tricky to play. My a3 and c2 pawns are weak, and I have to make sure I don't lose one of them.

12.c4 Rfd8

[Capitalizing on the soon-to-be-open file.]

13.cxd5 Nxd5 14.Qc1 Rac8 15.Qb2

I really liked this two-move combo of Qd1-c1-b2 when I found it. He can just play f6 here and be completely fine, but after f6 I can play moves like Rfc1 and Nc4 with no real problems.

15...Bf6

[TB Note —Max's nice conception is challenged by a rude computer, as so often happens to us all. My silicon friend points out a long tactical semi-refutation for black with 15...Qc2! with threats on the 2nd rank. Since this was a rapid game, I expect both players overlooked that the natural reply for white in response 16. Rac1, which looks solid, is met by a long forced sequence: 16... Qxb2 17. Bxb2 Rxc1 18. Rxc1 (or 18.Bxc1 Nc3 is very strong for black) …Nxe3! 19. fxe3, Rxd2 20. Rc8+, Bf8 21. Be5, Rxe2 22. Bd6

Analysis position after 22.Bd6

22…g5 23. Bxf8 h5! and black appears to be better in this endgame, (he threatens …Be4), though white would have drawing chances with opposite bishops.

White has other alternatives than this main line, but the computer negates them all, such as 16.Nc4 Qxb2 17.Nxb2 f6, which threatens ...e5 and shows white's pieces are awkwardly placed here. 18.Nc4 b5 19.Na5 e5 etc.]

16.Bxf6 Nxf6 17.Rac1 Qe7 18.Nc4 Ne4 19.Rfd1 Qg5 20.Rxd8+

I thought for a while on this move.

On one hand, I didn't want to trade off all of the pieces and play for a draw in a sharp position. On the other hand, my opponent is known for excelling in sharp positions. I eventually decided that trading off all of the rooks would benefit me since he has a possible incoming attack, and my light-squared bishop should be better than his in an endgame.

20...Rxd8 21.Rd1 h6 22.Rxd8+ Qxd8 23.f3

Kicking out his strong e4 Knight and creating a possible e4 push later on. Note that my Knight is very strong on c4 with many good squares as options, and that if he tries to kick it out with b5, he is creating a very weak pawn on the same color square as my bishop.

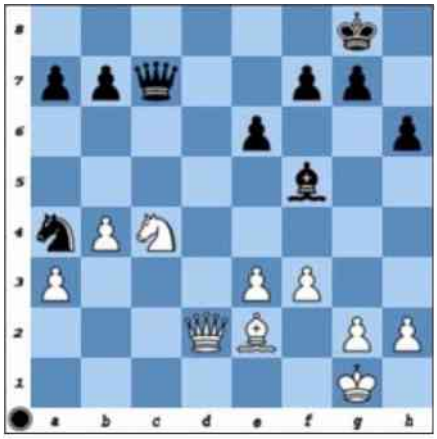
23...Nc5 24.b4

Maybe not the best move, but I thought that it made sense to harass his Knight even more.

24...Na4 25.Qc1 Qc7

Although the computer likes this move, I think that it practically isn't his best choice. It allows my queen the open d-file, and with it some potential winning chances.

26.Qd2



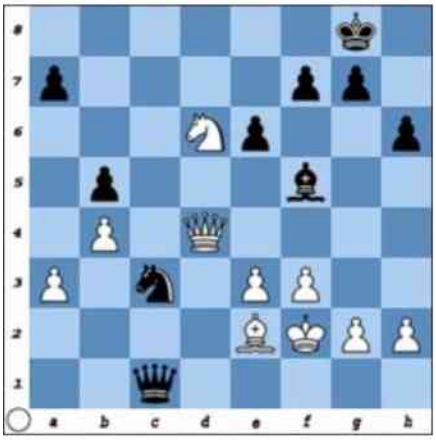
26...b5

I think that b5 was the move that ultimately changed the game in my mind from "I think I'm slightly better but it's hard to say" to "I think I could actually win this game". It seals his two queenside pawns on light squares after a6, and provides me lots of practical chances.

27.Nd6 a6 28.Qd4

[Centralizing my queen]

28...Qc1+ 29.Kf2 Nc3?



30.Ne8!!

The winning idea! I had 4 minutes here and spent one and a half of them calculating out this line.

30...f6?

He actually had the hard-to-see defensive try Qg1+! forcing us into an endgame after 31. Kxg1 Nxe2+ 32. Kf2 Nxd4 33. exd4, where white is still significantly better due to the queenside pawn placement. Nc7 will come and life isn't easy for black.

31.Qd7 Kf8 32.Nd6 Kg8 33.Qf7+ Kh8 34.Ne8 Nd1+ 35.Kg3

And there is no way for black to stop the mate threat. **1-0**

Green, John W
Braunlich, Tom
Tulsa Open TU (1.2), 18.01.2003 **[B90]**
[Notes by TB]

The late John Green did not have many games in the Okie Database as most of his playing career was in the '70s and '80s. But this more recent game, from January 2003, is a good illustration of his style and his good opening knowledge. It was also my first tournament game in Oklahoma in over 15 years.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3

Like we did many times 'in the old days' of the 1970s, we get into a sharp Najdorf. I think John always used to play the main line 6. Bg5, and we had at least two games in the Poison Pawn variation as I remember. Here he plays the "English Attack" — which is common now, but keep in mind that John and I both watched the development of this move by English players like Nunn and Keene in the 1970s. 6. Be3 was originally 'frowned upon' in the Najdorf because black can reply 6...Ng4, which is awkward. But the English players found that this move can backfire on Black and started winning those games. So Najdorf experts like Walter Browne switched to playing 6...e6, transposing to a so-called Scheveningen setup where white was committed to Be3. He won a fabulous game versus GM Robert Byrne in the 75 U.S. Championship. (I'll append it below). But the Russians saw that game and had a refutation to Browne's play up their sleeve. At the Interzonal a few months later Soviet GM Tseshkovsky sprung this improvement as white against Browne and won a stunning game that knocked Browne out of the world championship cycle. After that, the 'pure Najdorf' move 6...e5 became the main line and continues to be so (although you still see all three moves played here even to this day). John knew all this, of course. He watched it like I did. So of course in this game, I try to hold up the honor of the old line...

6...Ng4

[Here are the above-mentioned two games: 6...e6 7.Be2 Nbd7 8.g4 h6 9.f4 b5 10.g5 hxg5 11.fxg5 Rh3! 12.Bf4 *(12.Bf2!* was the Soviet improvement: *12...Rxc3 13.gxf6 Rh3 14.Nxe6! Qa5+ 15.c3 fxe6 16.fxg7 Bxg7 17.Qxd6 Rh6 18.Rg1 Bf8 19.Rg8 Qd8 20.0-0-0 Qe7 21.Qc6 Rb8 22.Ba7 Kf7 23.Rg2 Rb7 24.Qxc8 Rxa7 25.Rf1+ Nf6 26.e5 Qd7 27.Rxf6+ Rxf6 28.Bh5+ Rg6 29.Bxg6+ Ke7 30.Qc5+* 1-0 (30) Tseshkovsky,V (2550)-Browne,W (2585) Manila 1976*)* 12...b4 13.Nd5 exd5 14.gxf6 Nxf6 15.Nc6 Qb6 16.exd5 Ne4 17.Qd4 Qxd4 18.Nxd4 g5 19.Bc1 Bg7 20.Nc6 Ng3 21.Rg1 Nxe2 22.Rxg5 Nd4 23.Rxg7 Nxc2+ 24.Kd1 Nxa1 25.Rg8+ Kd7 26.Rf8 Rd3+ 27.Bd2 Rxd5 28.Nxb4 Rf5 29.Bc3 a5 30.Nd3 a4 0-1 (30) Byrne,R - Browne,W Oberlin 1975]

7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Bg3 Bg7

Black has reached a quasi-dragon position with a strong N coming to e5 soon, and with white's B awkward on g3. But the cost for this is a weakened black kingside which white can strike at any time with h2-h4, as seen in this game.

10.Qd2 Nc6 11.Nxc6?!

White should retreat with 11.Nb3. Taking the knight saves development time but strengthens black's game too much here. A recent example is: 11.Nb3 b5 12.h4 b4 13.Nd5 gxh4 14.Bxh4 Bxb2 15.Rb1 Bg7 with a dynamically equal position. 0-1 (58) Ponomariov (2711) - Vachier Lagrave (2723) 2015

11...bxc6= 12.Bc4 Qa5 13.h4 Rb8 14.Bb3 Be6 15.f3 Ne5 16.hxg5 hxg5 17.Rxh8+ Bxh8 18.0-0-0 [18.Qxg5?? Nxf3+ 19.gxf3 Qxg5]

18...Kd7 19.Na4?!

The computer approves of all John's moves up until now. Here John logically wants to exchange queens in view of black's upcoming threat of ...Nc4. But a better way to do it was 19.Ne2 Qxd2+ 20.Kxd2 Nc4+ 21.Bxc4 Bxc4 22.b3 The computer calls this ending equal, but I have a lot of experience with endgames in the Sicilian and would have been confident in playing this one for a win, regardless, although anything can happen. So, as I said, John was a hard man to beat -- in this case, it required a queen sacrifice!

19...Qxa4! 20.Bxa4

[20.Bxe5 Bxe5 21.Bxa4 Bxb2+ 22.Kb1 Bc3+-+]

20...Nc4

The combination is simple. The double threat of 21...NxQ or 21...Bxb2+ and 22...Na3 mate means that black wins back the sacrificed queen. The question is can white avoid further material or positional losses as well.

21.Bb3

Here John makes a subtle slip. The key variation I considered was 21.c3 Nxd2 22.Rxd2 Bxa2 23.b3 Bxb3 24.Rb2 Bxa4 25.Rxb8 Bxc3 and black has three pawns for the exchange with strong winning chances.

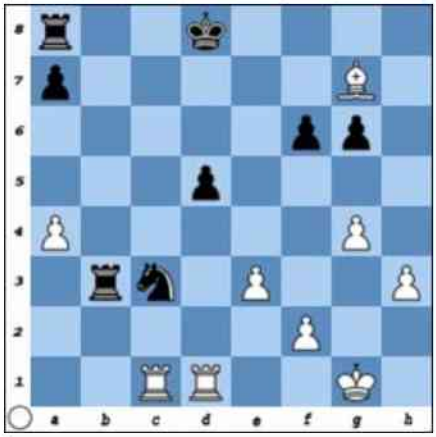
The best defense for white was the unnatural move 21.b3 During the game I thought this would leave white's B stranded on a4 and I didn't consider it much, but the computer seems to show it doesn't stay stranded forever and white maintains rough equality after 21...Nxd2 22.Kxd2.

21...Bxb2+ 22.Kb1 Nxd2+ 23.Rxd2?!

The last chance was 23.Kxb2, but John was in time trouble and jumped at the chance to finally get rid of that pesky knight. So, Black emerges up a pawn and the rest of the game is an easy win as long as black is careful.

23...Ba3 24.Be5 c5 25.Ka1 f6 26.Bc3 Rh8 27.Rd1 Rh2 28.Rg1 c4 29.Ba4+ Kc7 30.Ba5+ Kc8 31.Be1? [(31.Bb6)] **31...Bc5 32.Rf1 Rxg2 33.Rh1 Rg1 34.Rxg1 Bxg1 35.Kb2 d5 36.Bc6 d4 37.Be8 c3+ 38.Kb1 Bc4 39.Bg3 Be3 40.Bh5 d3 41.cxd3 Bxd3+ 42.Ka1 0-1**

Barnes, Maxwell (1911)
Casteel, Jerry (1926) [A06]
Holiday Open , Stroud (4.2), 18.12.2021
1.b3 d5 2.Bb2 Nf6 3.Nf3 c5 4.e3 Nc6 5.Bb5 Bg4 6.h3 Bh5 7.d3 e6 8.Bxc6+ bxc6 9.Nbd2 Be7 10.g4 Bg6 11.Qe2 Qa5 12.a4 c4? 13.dxc4 Bxc2 14.Nd4⌘ Bg6 15.Nxc6+- Qc7 16.Nxe7 Qxe7 17.cxd5 exd5 18.Qb5+ Qd7 19.Qxd7+ Kxd7 20.Rc1 Ne4 21.Bxg7 Rhb8 22.Nf3 Rxb3 23.Ne5+ Kd8 24.0-0 f6 25.Nxg6 hxg6 26.Rfd1 Nc3



27.Rxc3! Rxc3 28.Bxf6+ Kd7 29.Bxc3 Ke6 30.Bd4 1-0

Luscomb, David (2055)
Pai, Rahul (1720) [B30]
Holiday Open TU (4.1), 18.12.2021
[Notes by TB]

Last-round board one game:

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6 4.0-0 Nge7 5.c3

Ng6 6.d4 cxd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.e5 Be7 9.Nc3 0-0 10.a3 f6 [10...Bd7] **11.Bxc6?!**

David is intent on a kingside attack, but it is slow to develop. [11.exf6 Bxf6 12.Be3=]

11...bxc6 12.Na4 fxe5 13.Nxe5 Nxe5 14.dxe5 c5 15.Qg4 Qe8

[15...Rb8! to pressure b2 16.Bh6 Rf7 Black is safe and has a strong center with mobile pawns, while the Na4 is offside; for example 17.Rac1 c4 18.Rfd1 Qe8 19.Nc3 Rxb2]

16.Nc3 Bd7 [16...Rb8]

17.b4 Rc8 18.bxc5 Rxc5 19.Ne2 Qf7?

[19...Rc4! 20.Nd4 Bc5 21.Be3 Qb8 was strong]

20.Be3 Rc4 21.Nd4 Rfc8 22.Rfc1 Bd8

[22...Rxc1+ 23.Rxc1 Bxa3 24.Rxc8+ Bxc8 25.Nb5 Bb2! with an edge for black.]

23.h3 Bb6 24.Qd1 Qg6 25.Rxc4 Rxc4 26.Rc1 Rxc1 27.Qxc1 h6

[Pai was slipping into time trouble. He still has some edge after 27...Qd3 28.Qb2]

28.Nf3!

An excellent move, trading off black's good piece and leaving a 'good knight vs bad bishop' position.

28...Bxe3 29.Qxe3 Bc6 30.Qc5 [30.Qxa7? d4=]

30...Qb1+ 31.Kh2 Qb6 32.Qe7

Such a position is very hard to defend for black, especially in time trouble.

32...Bb7 33.Qe8+ Kh7 34.Qh5 Qd8 35.h4 Kg8 36.Qg4 Qe8 37.Nd4 Bc8 38.h5 Qf7 39.f4 Bd7 40.Kg3 Kf8 41.Qg6! Qxg6+?

The ending is lost as white will have pawn breakthroughs. Perhaps 41...Ke7!? might hold? For example, 42.f5!? Qxg6+ 43.fxg6 Be8 44.Kh4 Bd7 45.g4 Be8 46.g5 Ba4 47.gxh6 gxh6 48.g7 Kf7 49.Nxe6 Bd7 50.Nc7 d4 51.e6+ Bxe6 52.Nxe6 d3! But no doubt white can improve on all of that.

42.hxg6 Ke7 43.Kh4 Kd8 44.g4 Kc7 45.f5 Kd8 46.f6 1-0

Burton, Stone (1123)
Rezzaq-Shannon, Khumar [C27]
Holiday Open Stroud (4), 18.12.2021

Key last-round game in the Novice section.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 Bc5 4.Bc4 d6 5.h3 0-0 6.a3 c6 7.d3 h6 8.Na4 Bxf2+ 9.Kxf2 b5 10.Bb3 bxa4 11.Bxa4 Qb6+ 12.Kf1?

[Better is the pawn gambit 12.Be3 Qxb2 13.Qd2 with counterplay for the pawn.]

12...Ba6 13.Qe2 Nbd7 14.b4 d5 15.exd5 Nxd5 16.Nxe5 Nxe5 17.Qxe5 Rae8 18.Qg3 Qd8 19.c4 Qf6+ 20.Kg1 Nc3 21.Kh2 Nxa4 22.Rb1 Nc3 23.Bb2 Ne2 24.Bxf6 Nxg3 25.Bxg7 Nxh1 26.Bxh6 Nf2 27.Bxf8 Kxf8 28.Rb3 Re3 29.b5 cxb5 30.cxb5 Bb7 31.a4 Rxd3 [and Black won] **0-1**

Rezzaq-Shannon, Khumar
Kim, Leo (1025) [B13]
Holiday Open TU (4), 18.12.2021
[Notes by TB]
1.e4 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.h3 Nc6 5.d4 Bf5 6.Bd3 Bxd3 7.Qxd3 e6 8.c3 Nf6 9.Bf4 Bd6 10.Ne5 Qc7 11.Nxc6 Bxf4 12.Nb4 a5 13.Qb5+ Qd7 [13...Ke7!]

14.Qxd7+ Nxd7 15.Nd3 Bd6= 16.f4 Ke7 17.Nd2 Rac8 18.Ne5 f6 19.Nxd7 Kxd7 20.0-0 Rc7 21.Rae1 b5 22.f5 e5 23.dxe5 Bxe5 [23...fxe5]

24.Nf3 Bd6 25.Rd1 Rc5 26.Rd3 Rhc8 27.Rfd1 b4 28.Rxd5 Rxd5 29.Rxd5 bxc3 30.bxc3 Rc5?

It look like black draws with 30...Rxc3 31.Rxa5 Rc1+ 32.Kf2 Rc2+ 33.Kf1 Rc1+= 34.Ke2

(34.Ne1?? Rxe1+) 34...Rc2+ 35.Kd3 Rxg2=

31.Rxc5 Bxc5+ 32.Kf1 Kc6 33.a4 Ba3 34.Ke2 Kc5 35.Kd3 Kd5 36.g4 h6 37.Nd4 Bb2 38.Ne6 Ke5 39.Nxg7 [39.c4 Ba3 40.Nxg7 Kf4 41.c5 Kg3 42.c6 Bd6 43.Ke4 Kxh3 44.Kf3 Kh4 45.Ne6 h5 46.gxh5 Kxh5 47.c7] **39...Ba3 40.c4 1-0**

Casteel, Jerry (1926)
Abouzahr, Omar (1558) [B01]
Holiday Open TU (3), 18.12.2021

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.d4 Nxd5 4.c4 Nb6 5.Nc3 Bf5 6.Nf3 e6 7.Bg5 Be7 8.Bxe7 Qxe7 9.a3 c6 10.Be2 0-0 11.0-0 N8d7 12.Re1 Nf6 13.h3 Rfd8 14.Qc1 Ne4 15.Bf1 Nxc3 16.Qxc3 Qf6 17.Rad1 Na4 18.Qb3 Nb6 19.Ne5 Rab8 20.f4 Nd7 21.Qe3 Nxe5 22.dxe5 Qg6 23.Rd6 c5 24.Qxc5 Bxh3 25.Red1 Rf8 26.Qxa7 h6 27.Rd7 Rbc8 28.Qd4 Bg4 29.Rd3 Bf5 30.Rd2 Be4 31.Qd6 Qg3 32.Qd4 Bc6 33.Rd6 h5 34.b4 b5 35.cxb5 Ba8 36.Rd3 Qg4 37.a4 Rc1 38.Rd2 h4 39.Rd8 Bd5 40.Rxf8+ Kxf8 41.Qe3 Bc4 42.Rd8+ 1-0

Rees, Vaughan (1563)
Luscomb, David (2055) [E20]
Holiday Open TU (3.2), 18.12.2021
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.f3 0-0 5.e4 d5 6.e5 Nh5!? [6...Nfd7] **7.Be3 c5 8.g4? cxd4 9.Qxd4** [9.Bxd4 Nf4] **9...Nc6 10.Qd1 d4 11.Bxd4 Nxd4 12.Nh3 Qh4+ 13.Nf2 Rd8 14.gxh5 Qxh5 15.Be2** [15.Bg2 Qxe5+ 16.Kf1] **15...Nxf3+ 0-1**

Harvey, Leon (1285)
Beebe, David (1219) [A00]
Holiday Open TU (3), 18.12.2021
[Notes by TB]

1.b4

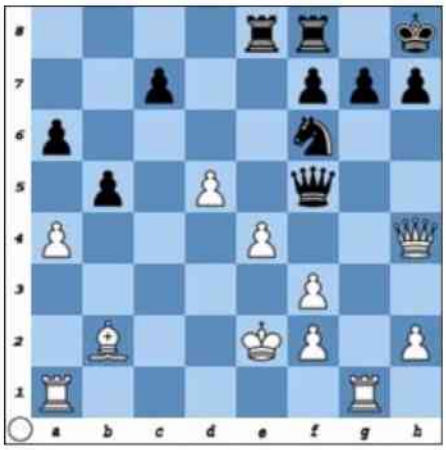
These two players contested scholastic chess together in Tulsa in the mid-70s, and now Leon trots out an old opening that was very popular here in those days, recommended by Dee Drake and others — the Polish Opening (also called the Orangutan). They produce a hard-fought game for us!

1...e5 2.Bb2 Bxb4 3.Bxe5 Nf6 4.a3 Bc5 5.e3 Nc6 6.Bb2 d5 7.Nf3 Bg4 8.d4 Bd6 9.c4 dxc4 10.Bxc4 0-0 11.Nbd2 a6 12.a4 Bb4 13.Qb3 Bxf3 [13...Ne4! would be strong.]

14.gxf3 Bxd2+ 15.Kxd2 Qd7 16.Rhg1 Ne5 17.Ke2 Nxc4 18.Qxc4 Kh8

[The computer says 18...g6 shutting down the g-file is safer and about equal. 19.e4 Rfe8 with a complex game ahead.]

19.d5! b5 20.Qh4 Qf5 21.e4 Rae8



22.Rxg7! Kxg7 23.Rg1+ Qg6 24.Qxf6+ Kg8 25.Qh8# 1-0

Braunlich, Tom (2200)
Pai, Rahul (1780) [D00]
Holiday Open (1), 18.12.2021
1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 c6 5.c4 dxc4 6.Bxc4 Bd6 7.Nc3 0-0 8.Qc2 f5 9.Nge2? [This has been played before, including by the Trompowski expert GM J. Hodgson; but I now just think it is bad.]
9...Nd7 10.Bd3 g6 11.g3 Nf6 12.Nf4 Bd7 13.0-0?! [Here I cooked up a bad idea, to play for f2-f3 and e2-e4 and hope that my pawn duo in the center would create chances somehow — and Rahul cleverly allows me to follow that plan into oblivion as I weaken too many squares around my king. Then he takes advantage of that nicely.]
13...Re8 14.Rfe1 Qc7 15.Rac1 Rac8 16.Ng2 [16.Qb3=]**16...Qb8 17.f3 c5 18.d5?** [18.Bb5]**18...c4-+ 19.Bf1 b5 20.e4 fxe4 21.Nxe4 Nxe4 22.fxe4 f5! 23.Nh4 fxe4 24.Rxe4 Rxe4 25.Qxe4 Re8 26.Qc2 Qb6+ 27.Kh1 Qe3 28.Rd1 Bg4 29.Rd2 Bc5** [Very well played by Rahul!] **0-1**

Upcoming Tournaments

For more information see www.ochess.org

FEB 13, 2022 MIDTOWN RAPID QUADS #2 Tulsa OK

3-RR "Quads"; G/26+5; Midtown Tulsa Chess Club, 17th and Harvard. Dual-rated. **Monthly** USCF-rated RAPID tournament at Tulsa's Midtown Chess Club -- part of a yearlong **Grand Prix** of USCF-rated Rapids with nice year-end prizes (TBA). Full Details: https://new.uschess.org/midtown-rapid-quads-2

FEB 17-21, 2022 13th SOUTHWEST CLASS CHAMPIONSHIPS Fort Worth TX

7-SS or 9-SS. 40/90 SD/30 +30; Seven class sections. DFW Airport Marriott South, 4151 Centreport Blvd, Fort Worth TX 76155. Full Details: https://new.uschess.org/13th-annual-southwest-class-championships

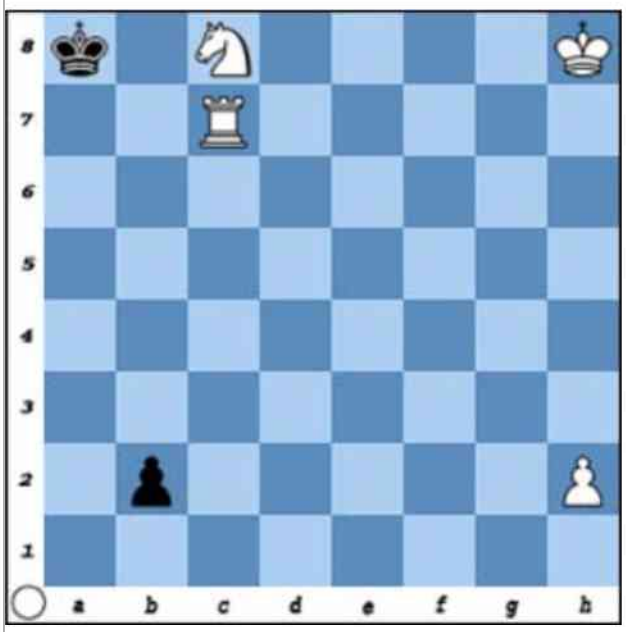
MAR 25-27 2022 26th MID-AMERICA OPEN St. Louis MO

5-SS, Six Sections. Full Details: https://new.uschess.org/26th-annual-mid-america-open

APR 2-3 2022 OKLAHOMA SENIOR OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP Stroud OK

4-SS, G/90+30. Open only to seniors (age 50+ as of April 2), of any state. No entry fee, but donations encouraged, with generous prizes and the top Okie resident will represent the state at the U.S. "Irwin" Senior Tournament of State Champions at the U.S. Open this Summer in California. The full details of this will be up soon on ochess.org and uschess.org. Sponsored by Harold Brown Jr. Sanctioned by OCA.

SOLUTION TO "A THORNY PUZZLE"



WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN, by Jerry Casteel

You were forewarned there are many false trails here. I hope you were able to solve it yourself. The answer is:

1.Nb6+!!

Did you fall into the first trap by **1.Ra7+, Kb8 2. Ra6 b1=Q 3.Rb6+** This seems to win, except **3...Ka8! 4.Rxb1** stalemate!

Another attractive line is **1.Ra7+ Kb8 2.Nd6** which allows the knight to catch the pawn and for a long time I tried to make this work. But it doesn't work. Black's king is in time to harass the knight with variations like this: **Kxa7** *(2...b1Q 3.Rb7+)* **3.Nb5+ Kb6 4.Nc3 Ka5 5.h4 Kb4 6.Nb1 Kb3 7.h5 Kc2 8.Na3+ Kb3 9.Nb1 Kc2=]**

Back to the main line: **1.Nb6+, Kb8** [Now, we cannot stop black from queening, but we might be able to use our rook to set up a winning knight fork after he queens. The question is how to do this, and there appears to be just one way, which is very hidden. I hope you were able to find it: **2.Rc3!! b1=Q 3.Nd7+** Now, we are all set to deliver our deadly fork, but we have to force his king onto the b7 square: **3...Ka7 4.Ra3+ Kb7** [Now it's fork time!] **5.Rb3+! Qxb3 6.Nc5+ Kc6 7.Nxb3** and white wins!

By IM John Donaldson

Three New Opening Books by Quality Chess

- ***Playing the Caro Kann*** by Lars Schandorff (344 pages, $29.95)
- ***Leningrad Dutch*** by Mihail Marin (344 pages, $29.95)
- ***Dutch Sidelines*** by Mihail Marin (304 pages, $29.95)

Back in 2010, Danish GM Lars Schandorff came out with his first book on the **Caro-Kann** that reflected increasing interest in the opening. Formerly seen as a rock-solid, albeit slightly passive opening, it was being reevaluated, particularly in the variation 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 where White castled queenside and Black on the other flank. Play in these lines, and in the advance variation (3.e5) could get quite sharp, but as Schandorff showed at the time, Black was holding his own.

Fast forward a little over a decade and this assessment continues to hold true. The Caro-Kann is experiencing popularity never before seen as it is being adopted by the best players in the world - Carlsen, Caruana and Firouzja to mention but three.

Part of the reason for this can be attributed to the line 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 and in particular the discovery of the paradoxical move 9…h5! (after 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2), where Black not only defends his h-pawn from capture but intends for it to play an active role.

Today Schandorff sees nothing wrong in the 4…Bf5 lines, but this time around is championing 4…Nf6. This has also affected his choice against the Two Knights variation (2.Nf3 d5 3.Nc3), previously 3…Bg4 and now 3…dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6.

Elsewhere he is still sticking with his earlier lines, albeit it with updated analysis. For example against the Panov-Botvinnik (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6), meeting 6.Nf3 with 6… Bg4 and 6.Bg5 with 6…dxc4. Here, and throughout the book, he offers alternative variations to his main choices. For example: 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Qb3 Bxf3 9.gxf3 and now both 9…e6 and 9…Nb6.

The heart of *Playing the Caro-Kann* is Schandorff's coverage of the Advance Variation (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5). It is roughly double the amount of his previous book, reflecting the many developments in the most theoretically challenging line against the Caro-Kann.

Many books and DVDs have come out on the Caro-Kann the past few years and Schandorff's extensive bibliography reflects this. This book is both well-researched and well-explained. Opening books by definition tend to be a little dry, but Schandorff's colorful style keeps the reader engaged. Anyone intending to play the Caro-Kann will want this book.

While a number of recent books have come out on the Caro-Kann, this is not the case with the **Leningrad Dutch**, the subject of a two-volume work by the renowned author Mihail Marin, who is noted for his ability to clearly explain complex material.

The first volume is primarily devoted to the position arising after 1.d4 f5 2.c4 Nf6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.Nf3 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.Nc3 Qe8, with Black aiming to achieve …e5 - Marin explains Black's strategic aims quite well in his lengthy introduction.

Should he do so the second player will often reach a very good version of the King's Indian. That the Leningrad happens to have much less theory than the K.I.D. is a bonus. These are some of the reasons why Nakamura, a noted King's Indian hero, has often played the Leningrad Dutch.

Marin's second volume, principally devoted to anti-Dutch lines like 2.Bg5, 2.Nc3 and 2.e4, might not interest a player with the Pirc or Modern in their opening repertoire as they could enter the Dutch via 1.d4 d6 2.c4 f5, but Marin makes the case there is nothing to fear when White avoids 2.c4.

This volume also makes for essential reading if one wants to adopt the Dutch as an all-purpose answer to everything but 1.e4.

One example of this is the Anti-Dutch line in the Reti that starts with 1.Nf3 f5 2.d3. White intends to play e2-e4 with strong effect and Adrien Demuth in the second edition of his book *The Modernized Reti,* considers Black's best answer to be 2…Nc6, meeting 3.e4 with 3…e5! He comes to the conclusion White's best try is to shift gears and play 3.d4, losing a tempo but hoping to exploit the knight's placement on c6. Marin agrees with this.

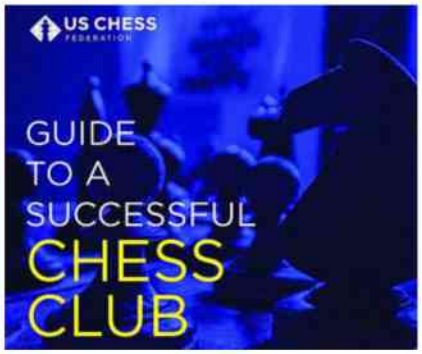
One option for the second player would then be to enter the Stonewall variation with …d5, but both Demuth and Marin prefer for Black to adopt a Classical Dutch set-up with …d6. They each offer a similar main line: 1.Nf3 f5 2.d3 Nc6 3.d4 e6 4.g3 Nf6 5.Bg2 Be7 6.c4 0-0 7.0-0 d6 8.d5 Ne5 9.Qb3 Nxf3+ 10.exf3 e5 11.f4 and now Marin improves on Demuth's 11…exf4 and 11…e4 with 11…Nd7.

With few recent books written about his topic, Marin's bibliography draws heavily on White opening repertoire works and their recommendations against the Leningrad Dutch. This extends all the way to Sam Shankland's 2020 1.d4 course for Chessable. One omission in the list of sources consulted is Demuth's *The Modernized Dutch* published in late 2019.

Those looking for an all-purpose answer to all of White's major opening tries besides 1.e4 will find a repertoire based on the Leningrad Dutch fits the bill.

Mihail Marin's two volume series is the definitive guide.

Quality Chess offers its books in a variety of formats, both digital (using Forward Chess) and print. The prices listed above are for the paperback versions. Go to (https://www.qualitychess.co.uk/) for more information.



Guide to Starting a Successful Chess Club

OCA Board member Paul Covington was among those on the Clubs Committee of the USCF who recently updated their ***Guide to Starting a Successful Chess Club***. The goal of this guide is to give resources to those wanting to start a new chess club OR improve and existing one.

"We strongly believe in the power of chess clubs to help bring communities together," said Abel Talamantez, committee chair. "… We would also be happy to help mentor anyone looking to start a club, feel free to contact the U.S.Chess clubs committee for help" atalamantez2@gmail.com

Download it here: https://new.uschess.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/guide-to-a-successful-chess-club-09.03.2021_1.pdf